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HARVARD UNIVERSITY
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EXECUTIVE PROGRAM IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
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OPPORTUNITY UNFULFILLED
THE USE AND PERCEPTIONS OF INTELLIGENCE AT THE WHITE HOUSE

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A SEARCH OF PRESIDENTIAL MEMOIRS AND THOSE OF PRINCIPAL ASSISTANTS OVER THE PAST 30 YEARS OR SO TURNS UP REMARKABLY LITTLE DISCUSSION OR PERSPECTIVE ON THE ROLE PLAYED BY DIRECTORS OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE (DCI) OR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION IN PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONMAKING ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

WHY THIS DEARTH OF FIRST-HAND REFLECTION AND EVALUATION IN A MAJOR AREA OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL SECURITY HISTORY? THERE ARE DOUBTLESS SEVERAL REASONS FOR THIS, BUT I BELIEVE THAT THIS VOID IN THE EXAMINATION OF PRESIDENTS, INTELLIGENCE AND DECISIONMAKING -- APART FROM COVERT ACTION -- IS EXPLAINED IN SOME MEASURE BY FACTORS THAT CONTINUE TO DOMINATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PRESIDENTS AND THE CIA AND INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY: INTELLIGENCE COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT ARE A BLACK HOLE FOR MOST PRESIDENTS AND THEIR KEY ADVISERS, NEITHER ADEQUATELY UNDERSTOOD NOR ADEQUATELY EXPLOITED. FOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS, PRESIDENTIAL AND SENIOR LEVEL VIEWS OF

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THE INTELLIGENCE THEY RECEIVE AND HOW THEY USE IT (OR NOT) ARE JUST AS UNFAMILIAR, GIVING RISE TO PERCEPTIONS DOMINATED BY WISHFUL THINKING AND EVEN CONCEIT. IN MY OPINION, OVER THE YEARS, BOTH THE WHITE HOUSE AND THE CIA HAVE FAILED TO TAKE MAXIMUM ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY FOR BETTER INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT AND DECISIONMAKING. THIS SITUATION IS NOT PECULIAR TO ANY SINGLE ADMINISTRATION OR PARTICULAR VIEW OF THE CIA, BUT RATHER A PROBLEM OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, BUREAUCRATIC CULTURES, AND THE POLICY PROCESS ITSELF.

WHAT THE PRESIDENT GETS

THE PRESIDENT ROUTINELY RECEIVES ONLY ONE INTELLIGENCE PRODUCT THAT IS NOT SUMMARIZED OR COMMENTED UPON BY SOMEONE OUTSIDE THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY: THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF. HE RECEIVES THIS EVERY MORNING, ALONG WITH A FEW STATE AND CIA CABLES OF SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE. THROUGH THE COURSE OF THE DAY, THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER KEEPS THE PRESIDENT APPRISED OF SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENTS OVERSEAS. IN A CRISIS, THE FLOW OF INFORMATION INCREASES.

NATURALLY, THE PRESIDENT RECEIVES INFORMATION THROUGH CHANNELS OTHER THAN THE EARLY MORNING FOLDER AND THE OCCASIONAL CABLE DURING THE DAY -- REPORTS IN MEETINGS, THE KEY JUDGMENTS OF IMPORTANT NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES, AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE AS WELL, FROM THE DCI OR THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER.

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NEVERTHELESS, EACH OF THE FOUR PRESIDENTS I HAVE OBSERVED HAS RECEIVED ONLY A FRACTION OF INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS SPECIFICALLY COLLECTED AND PREPARED FOR SENIOR POLICYMAKERS. THIS HAS PLACED A PREMIUM ON THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF, ON THE WILLINGNESS AND ABILITY OF THE DCI TO GIVE IMPORTANT ASSESSMENTS DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENT, AND ON THE WILLINGNESS OF THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER TO FORWARD INTELLIGENCE REPORTS TO THE PRESIDENT. DISINTEREST OR RELUCTANCE ON THE PART OF A DCI (OR NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER) TO TAKE AN ACTIVIST, EVEN AGGRESSIVE ROLE IN THIS RESPECT IS A SEVERE -- EVEN IRREPARABLE -- HANDICAP TO ENSURING THAT INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION AND ASSESSMENTS REACH THE PRESIDENT.

I BELIEVE THE NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS OF INTELLIGENCE OF MOST PRESIDENTS AND THEIR SENIOR ADVISERS WHILE IN OFFICE OR AFTERWARD ARE DUE TO A NUMBER OF FACTORS. IMPORTANT AMONG THEM ARE THE FOLLOWING:

-- THE FIRST AND MOST SIGNIFICANT IS FAILURE. WHETHER NIXON'S UNHAPPINESS OVER MISESTIMATES OF PLANNED SOVIET ICBM DEPLOYMENTS OR CARTER'S OVER FAILURE TO FORECAST THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION OR UNTIMELY UPWARD REVISIONS OF NORTH KOREAN TROOP STRENGTH, THESE PRESIDENTS AND THEIR ADVISERS -- WITH JUSTIFICATION -- BELIEVED CIA ASSESSMENTS EITHER CONTRIBUTED IMPORTANTLY TO POLICY DISASTERS OR MADE THEM VULNERABLE TO LATER CRITICISM.

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FURTHER, PRESIDENTS WANT THE KIND OF TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE THAT INFORMS AND FACILITATES DAY-TO-DAY DECISIONMAKING AND WHERE TIMELY AND ACCURATE INTELLIGENCE PERFORMANCE IS HARDEST.

-- SECOND, PRESIDENTS DO NOT LIKE CONTROVERSY WITHIN THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, AND THEY LIKE IT EVEN LESS WHEN IT BECOMES PUBLIC. NOR DO PRESIDENTS WELCOME DEBATE OVER BASIC FACTS ONCE THEY HAVE MADE A DECISION. WHETHER THE ISSUE IS TROUBLESOME ASSESSMENTS ON VIETNAM (JOHNSON), THE PUBLIC DISPUTE BETWEEN THE CIA AND DEFENSE ON WHETHER THE SS-9 WAS A MRV OR MIRV (NIXON), ENERGY ESTIMATES (CARTER), OR THE SOVIET GAS PIPELINE (REAGAN), THESE AND OTHER INTELLIGENCE DEBATES OVER TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER, VERIFICATION OF ARMS CONTROL, SOVIET DEFENSE SPENDING, SOVIET WEAPONS PROGRAMS AND MANY MORE HAVE CAUSED CONTROVERSY AND WEAKENED SUPPORT FOR POLICY.

-- THIRD, PRESIDENTS DO NOT WELCOME NEW INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS UNDERCUTTING POLICIES BASED ON EARLIER ASSESSMENTS. WHEN NEW INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS RESULTS IN CHANGING THE STATISTICAL BASIS FOR THE US POSITION IN MBFR, SUBSTANTIALLY ELEVATING ESTIMATES OF NORTH KOREAN FORCES AT A TIME WHEN THE PRESIDENT IS PRESSING TO REDUCE US FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA, OR "DISCOVERING" A SOVIET BRIGADE IN CUBA, IT IS NO REVELATION TO OBSERVE THAT PRESIDENTS REGARD US LESS THAN FONDLY.

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-- FOURTH, SUCCESSIVE ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE GENERALLY REGARDED WITH SKEPTICISM THE GROWING DIRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONGRESS AND US INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES ABOVE AND BEYOND THE ACTUAL OVERSIGHT PROCESS. IN RECENT YEARS, THE PROVISION OF GREAT QUANTITIES OF HIGHLY SENSITIVE INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS TO MEMBERS OF CONGRESS AND THEIR STAFFS HAS LARGELY ELIMINATED THE EXECUTIVE'S LONGSTANDING ADVANTAGE OF A NEAR MONOPOLY OF INFORMATION ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE.

-- FINALLY, I BELIEVE PRESIDENTS AND THEIR NATIONAL SECURITY TEAMS USUALLY ARE ILL-INFORMED ABOUT INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES AND THEREFORE HAVE UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS OF WHAT INTELLIGENCE CAN DO FOR THEM, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY SEE THE GENUINELY EXTRAORDINARY CAPABILITIES OF US INTELLIGENCE FOR COLLECTING AND PROCESSING INFORMATION. POLICYMAKERS USUALLY LEARN THE HARD WAY THAT WHILE INTELLIGENCE CAN TELL THEM A GREAT DEAL, IT ONLY RARELY -- AND USUALLY IN CRISES INVOLVING MILITARY FORCES -- PROVIDES THE KIND OF UNAMBIGUOUS AND TIMELY INFORMATION THAT CAN MAKE DAY-TO-DAY DECISIONMAKING SIMPLER AND LESS RISKY. INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS OCCASIONALLY ENCOURAGE SUCH EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS BY PRETENDING A CONFIDENCE IN

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THEIR JUDGMENTS THEY CANNOT REASONABLY JUSTIFY AND BY FAILING TO BE CANDID ABOUT THE QUALITY AND RELIABILITY OF THEIR INFORMATION AND THE POSSIBILITY OF OTHER OUTCOMES. ONCE BITTEN BY AN ERRONEOUS OR MISLEADING INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENT, MOST WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS -- INCLUDING PRESIDENTS -- WILL BE TWICE-SHY ABOUT RELYING ON OR ACCEPTING UNQUESTIONINGLY A SECOND.

A CASE STUDY ILLUSTRATES THE CONTRIBUTION OF INTELLIGENCE TO A PRESIDENT'S POLICYMAKING AND SIMULTANEOUSLY THE PROBLEMS IT CAN BRING -- INF. CAPABILITY OF U.S. INTELLIGENCE TO MONITOR DEPLOYED INF WEAPONS AND OTHER TREATY PROVISIONS MADE THE TREATY POSSIBLE IN THE FIRST PLACE. BUT OUR UNCERTAINTIES IN SOME AREAS, DISAGREEMENT WITHIN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY ON THE NUMBER OF NON-DEPLOYED MISSILES, PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF THESE DISAGREEMENTS AND EXPLOITATION OF THEM IN DEBATE PRESENTED PROBLEMS TO THE EXECUTIVE. FOR THE WHITE HOUSE, ON THIS ISSUE -- AND SO MANY OTHERS -- INTELLIGENCE WAS A BITTERSWEET PLAYER.

OFTEN, STAFF AT THE WHITE HOUSE DO NOT KNOW HOW TO USE EFFECTIVELY THE VAST SYSTEM THEY DIRECT -- AND, TOO OFTEN, AN INTELLIGENCE BUREAUCRACY THAT DOES NOT WANT SUCH DIRECTION OFFERS LITTLE HELP. THERE IS A LONGSTANDING PERCEPTION AT THE

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WHITE HOUSE THAT CHANGING THE WAY THE INTELLIGENCE BUREAUCRACIES DO BUSINESS -- FOR EXAMPLE, EVEN THE PRESENTATION OF INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION TO THE PRESIDENT -- IS JUST TOO HARD, TAKES TOO MUCH TIME AND ENERGY, AND ULTIMATELY YIELDS LITTLE.

A LACK OF FEEDBACK AND, MORE BROADLY, INTELLIGENCE POLICY GUIDANCE FROM THE PRESIDENT (AND OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS) HAS BEEN A MAJOR OBSTACLE TO IMPROVED AND MORE RESPONSIVE INTELLIGENCE PERFORMANCE. THE LACK OF RECEPTIVITY ON THE PART OF SENIOR INTELLIGENCE OFFICIALS ON THOSE INFREQUENT OCCASIONS WHEN GUIDANCE, ADVICE OR FEEDBACK HAS BEEN OFFERED IS EQUALLY TO BLAME. EVEN SO, IF EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND ESPECIALLY WHITE HOUSE OFFICIALS VIEW CONGRESSIONAL INFLUENCE ON INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY, PRIORITIES AND INVESTMENT AS EXCESSIVE, IT IS IN PART BECAUSE SENIOR POLICYMAKERS IN SUCCESSIVE ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE NOT NEGLECTED THEIR OWN RESPONSIBILITIES IN THESE AREAS.

A PRESIDENT AND HIS NATIONAL SECURITY TEAM (THE SECRETARIES OF STATE AND DEFENSE, AND NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER) SHOULD VIEW INTELLIGENCE AS AN IMPORTANT ASSET IN FOREIGN POLICYMAKING AND SHOULD BE PREPARED TO DEVOTE THE TIME AND ENERGY TO WORKING WITH THE DCI TO PROVIDE USEFUL GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION TO THE COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS EFFORTS OF CIA AND THE REST OF US INTELLIGENCE. CONTRARY TO THE VIEW OF THOSE WHO ARE APPREHENSIVE OVER A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLICYMAKERS AND

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INTELLIGENCE, I BELIEVE IT IS NOT CLOSE ENOUGH -- THAT MORE INTERACTION, FEEDBACK AND DIRECTION AS TO STRATEGY, PRIORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS IS CRITICAL TO BETTER PERFORMANCE, AND THAT THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY OF INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS AND JUDGMENTS.

THERE HAS BEEN PROGRESS IN THE LAST TEN YEARS, EVEN THOUGH MUCH MORE CAN BE DONE. THE CARTER AND REAGAN ADMINISTRATIONS HAVE WORKED CONSTRUCTIVELY AT A HIGH LEVEL TO INFORM CIA OF THE ANALYTICAL NEEDS OF THE PRESIDENT AND TO ADVISE THE AGENCY OF PERCEIVED SHORTCOMINGS IN COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS.

AFTER THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION, THE CARTER WHITE HOUSE TOOK SEVERAL STEPS TO ENSURE BETTER COMMUNICATION OF INTELLIGENCE NEEDS. A POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE WORKING GROUP (THE DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER, THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE, AND LATER THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY), WAS ESTABLISHED AT THE WHITE HOUSE. THE GROUP INTERPRETED ITS CHARTER BROADLY AND ALSO WORKED TO IMPROVE AND BETTER FOCUS FIELD REPORTING BY STATE, CIA AND ATTACHES. THIS AND OTHER RELATED EFFORTS HAD A SALUTARY EFFECT IN IMPROVING COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY AND THE WHITE HOUSE AND THUS IMPROVING INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO THE PRESIDENT.

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A MAJOR INNOVATION OF THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION IN THIS REGARD WAS THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION IN 1981 THAT HIS PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF SHOULD BE PROVIDED EACH DAY ALSO TO THE VICE PRESIDENT, THE SECRETARIES OF STATE AND DEFENSE, THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER AND LATER THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF. MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, PRIMARILY FOR SECURITY REASONS, THE PDB WAS TO BE DELIVERED TO THESE PRINCIPALS IN PERSON BY A SENIOR ANALYTICAL OFFICER OF THE CIA, WHO WOULD SIT WITH THE PRINCIPAL AND THEN CARRY THE DOCUMENT BACK TO THE CIA. THESE ARRANGEMENTS PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY UNIQUE IN US INTELLIGENCE HISTORY FOR INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS TO GET IMMEDIATE, INFORMED FEEDBACK FROM PRINCIPALS AND A SENSE OF THE PRIORITIES AND CONCERNS OF THE TOP OFFICIALS IN GOVERNMENT.

THE DAY TO DAY DIALOGUE BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS AND POLICYMAKERS AT ALL LEVELS HAS INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IN RECENT YEARS. INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN MORE AGGRESSIVE IN THIS REGARD AND POLICYMAKERS MORE RECEPTIVE. ROUTINE WEEKLY MEETINGS BETWEEN THE DCI AND, SEPARATELY, THE SECRETARIES OF STATE AND DEFENSE AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO IMPROVED RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS OF INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT. THE NSC STAFF AND SEVERAL REAGAN NSC ADVISERS WORKED WITH INTELLIGENCE MANAGERS TO IMPROVE RESPONSIVENESS TO PRESIDENTIAL INTELLIGENCE NEEDS AND TO REMEDY SHORTCOMINGS IN INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT.

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IN SUM, THE DIALOGUE ESSENTIAL TO BETTER INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT HAS IMPROVED, BUT SUCH PROGRESS IS HIGHLY PERISHABLE WITH THE ROUTINE TURNOVER IN SENIOR OFFICIALS. MOREOVER, THIS IMPROVED DIALOGUE UNTIL ONLY RECENTLY HAS FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON CURRENT INTELLIGENCE OR CRISIS-RELATED SUBJECTS. MUCH REMAINS TO BE DONE IN INSTITUTIONALIZING IMPROVED WHITE HOUSE INTELLIGENCE GUIDANCE POLICY, ATTENTION TO REQUIREMENTS, INVESTMENT, AND DIALOGUE ON STRATEGY AND LONGER-RANGE ISSUES.

NEARLY ALL PRESIDENTIAL COMMENTS ON THE QUALITY OF INTELLIGENCE ARE CRITICAL -- PROMPTED BY OUR FAILURE TO MEET EXPECTATIONS. INDEED, PRESIDENTS OFTEN CONSIDER INTELLIGENCE AS MUCH ANOTHER PROBLEM BUREAUCRACY AS A SOURCE OF HELPFUL INFORMATION, INSIGHT AND SUPPORT.

THIS POINT IS PERHAPS MOST GRAPHICALLY ILLUSTRATED BY A STORY INVOLVING PRESIDENT JOHNSON. AS RECOUNTED BY FORMER DCI RICHARD HELMS, AT A PRIVATE DINNER IN THE WHITE HOUSE FAMILY QUARTERS DURING JOHNSON'S TERM, THE PRESIDENT ENGAGED JOHN J. MCCLOY IN A DISCUSSION ABOUT INTELLIGENCE -- WITHIN EARSHOT OF HELMS. JOHNSON TOLD MCCLOY THINGS WERE GOING WELL IN INTELLIGENCE, AND THEN CONTINUED: "BUT LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT THESE INTELLIGENCE GUYS. WHEN I WAS GROWING UP IN TEXAS WE HAD A COW NAMED BESSIE. I'D GO OUT EARLY AND MILK HER. I'D GET HER IN THE STANCHION, SEAT MYSELF AND SQUEEZE OUT A PAIL OF

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FRESH MILK. ONE DAY I'D WORKED HARD AND GOTTEN A FULL PAIL OF MILK, BUT I WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION, AND OLD BESSIE SWEPT HER SHIT-SMEARED TAIL THROUGH THAT BUCKET OF MILK. NOW, YOU KNOW, THAT'S WHAT THESE INTELLIGENCE GUYS DO. YOU WORK HARD AND GET A GOOD PROGRAM OR POLICY GOING, AND THEY SWEEP A SHIT-SMEARED TAIL THROUGH IT."

ALTHOUGH THE ROUTINE ORDER OF BUSINESS AND INTERNAL ORGANIZATION MAY VARY FROM ADMINISTRATION TO ADMINISTRATION, I SUGGEST SEVERAL APPROACHES TO IMPROVE INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO THE PRESIDENT. NONE IS NEW. EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO CARRY OUT MOST OF THE SUGGESTIONS BUT THEY HAVE BEEN HAPHAZARD, TRANSITORY OR OBSTRUCTED BY BUREAUCRATIC, CULTURAL OR ATTITUDINAL PROBLEMS. THIS MUST CHANGE.

-- SENIOR INTELLIGENCE, STATE, DEFENSE AND NSC OFFICERS MUST ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN PERSONAL CONTACT TO ENSURE THAT INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS ARE WELL INFORMED AS TO THE ISSUES OF CONCERN TO THE PRESIDENT; POLICY MATTERS UNDER CONSIDERATION IN WHICH INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS CAN MAKE A CONTRIBUTION; AND THE OVERALL FOREIGN AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS AGENDA SO THAT THE PRESIDENT'S NEEDS CAN BE BETTER ANTICIPATED.

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-- DCI AGGRESSIVENESS IN GETTING SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS BEFORE THE PRESIDENT IS ESSENTIAL, BUT, ALONG WITH ACCESS TO THE PRESIDENT, HAS VARIED GREATLY. THIS UNDERTAKING IS CENTRAL TO THE DCI'S ROLE AS THE PRESIDENT'S PRINCIPAL INTELLIGENCE ADVISER. MOREOVER, THE DCI SHOULD ASSUME A SIMILAR ROLE WITH THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER -- PERHAPS THE BEST SOURCE OF INFORMATION ON ISSUES OF TOPICAL INTEREST TO THE PRESIDENT AND THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENSE AGENDA. FINALLY, THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK FROM THE PRESIDENT AND HIS NATIONAL SECURITY TEAM IS CRITICAL. CONTRARY TO THE VIEWS OF SOME, WE CANNOT PROPERLY DO OUR WORK IN SPLENDID ISOLATION -- AND SHOULD NOT. TIMELINESS, RELEVANCE AND OBJECTIVITY ARE NOT INCOMPATIBLE.

-- THE PRESIDENT AND HIS SENIOR NATIONAL SECURITY TEAM MUST TAKE SERIOUSLY THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE QUALITY OF INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT THEY GET. THEY MUST BE WILLING TO MAKE TIME TO UNDERSTAND INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES, THE IMPACT OF COMPETING PRIORITIES FOR COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS, AND MAJOR INVESTMENT DECISIONS. AND, THEY MUST BE WILLING TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN GUIDING INTELLIGENCE STRATEGY AND DETERMINING PRIORITIES.

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STEPS ALSO CAN AND HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF SOME OF THE CAUSES OF PRESIDENTIAL DISPLEASURE WITH INTELLIGENCE -- SUPPORT TO CONGRESS, REVISED ASSESSMENTS THAT HAVE POLICY IMPLICATIONS, SURPRISES, AND POLITICALLY DISAGREEABLE ASSESSMENTS. MORE CAN BE DONE. FOR EXAMPLE:

-- INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS SHOULD TAKE THE INITIATIVE TO LET POLICYMAKERS KNOW WHEN AN ESTIMATE OR OTHER FORM OF ANALYSIS WILL REVISE EARLIER ASSESSMENTS AND HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE PRESIDENT'S POLICIES. THERE IS, OF COURSE, A RISK THAT SOMEONE WILL TRY TO CHANGE OR STOP PUBLICATION OF AN UNWELCOME OR EMBARRASSING ESTIMATE. HERE THE DCI MUST STAND HIS GROUND TO PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE ASSESSMENT AND THE PROCESS.

-- INTELLIGENCE NEEDS TO DEVELOP A MECHANISM FOR BETTER INFORMING THE WHITE HOUSE ABOUT SUPPORT PROVIDED TO THE CONGRESS. THE INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES ARE PART OF THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH. IT IS NOT IMPROPER OR INAPPROPRIATE FOR THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY TO KEEP THE PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS STAFF ADVISED OF PAPERS PROVIDED TO THE CONGRESS, POSSIBLY CONTROVERSIAL TESTIMONY OR BRIEFINGS.

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-- FINALLY, GROUND RULES SHOULD BE DEVELOPED FOR THE DISCLOSURE OF DECLASSIFIED INTELLIGENCE. THE CURRENT LACK OF A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH CONTRIBUTES TO LEAKS; TO WHITE HOUSE SUSPICION OF OBSTRUCTIONISM, BUREAUCRATIC GAMES OR PURSUIT OF A CONTRARY POLICY AGENDA BY INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS; AND CONCERN ON THE PART OF INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS OVER THE APPEARANCE (AND SOMETIMES THE REALITY) OF POLITICIZATION OF INTELLIGENCE BY WHITE HOUSE OR OTHER POLICYMAKER-DIRECTED DECLASSIFICATION OF INFORMATION.

THE USEFULNESS OF THE CIA TO PRESIDENTS IN THAT AREA FOR WHICH THE CIA WAS PRIMARILY ESTABLISHED -- COLLECTION, REPORTING, ANALYSIS AND PRODUCTION OF INFORMATION -- HAS SUFFERED BECAUSE OF SELF-IMPOSED ISOLATION BY CIA AND THE LACK OF SUSTAINED INTEREST, UNDERSTANDING AND INVOLVEMENT BY PRESIDENTS AND THEIR NATIONAL SECURITY TEAMS. LACK OF WHITE HOUSE INVOLVEMENT HAS OFTEN LEFT INTELLIGENCE PROFESSIONALS ADRIFT AND UNCERTAIN AMID CONFLICTING PRIORITIES AND REQUIREMENTS, WITH THE INEVITABLE PRICE IN RELEVANCE AND TIMELINESS.

CIA AND THE OTHER US INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES REPRESENT AN EXTRAORDINARY NATIONAL ASSET. THE REBUILDING OF THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY OVER THE PAST DECADE HAS VASTLY

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AUGMENTED OUR COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS CAPABILITIES AND SHARPENED OUR SKILLS. CONGRESS HAS GREATLY ENHANCED ITS UNDERSTANDING OF INTELLIGENCE AND SHOWN A WILLINGNESS -- EVEN DETERMINATION -- TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE AND DIRECTION, AS WELL AS FUNDING. I BELIEVE THE WHITE HOUSE SHOULD ASSERT MORE AGGRESSIVELY ITS PROPER INTELLIGENCE POLICY DIRECTION AND GUIDANCE ROLE, AND THAT CIA SHOULD WELCOME THIS ROLE. COMMUNICATION AND DIALOGUE MUST BE FURTHER IMPROVED. ONLY THUS CAN WE SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE INTELLIGENCE SUPPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND, CONCOMITANTLY, BETTER SERVE THE POLICYMAKING PROCESS.

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